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Studio Art Centers International *Florence*



Newsletter 42 Spring 2010

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## The Home of the Mona Lisa

SACI's main building, the historic Palazzo dei Cartelloni (pictured above right), was built on the foundations of the houses where Francesco Del Giocondo, a wealthy Florentine silk merchant, once lived. Many scholars believe that Leonardo da Vinci's *Mona Lisa* is a portrait of Lisa Gherardini, Francesco's wife. Recently discovered fragments of majolica plates and a *pietraserena* wash basin attributed to Benedetto da Maiano carry the Del Giocondo family crest and came from the Palazzo dei Cartelloni. These objects were probably used by Mona Lisa. The palace was renovated in the 17th century by Vincenzo Viviani and commemorates the achievements of Galileo.



Photographer **Ralph Gibson** conducting a workshop at SACI.

*I first heard of SACI through a friend and was so impressed with what SACI had to offer that we sent our daughter, Yasmine, there for a semester. She took courses in photography, High Renaissance art, Italian language, and even Italian cooking. **Arman** and I felt this to be the most positive and profound experience Yasmine could have had at this juncture in her artistic and educational career.*

*SACI has bridged the gap between European and American cultures, making it “The Art School of Florence.”*

**Corice Canton Arman**

SACI firmly believes that it is as essential for art students to meet and study with major contemporary artists as it is for students to learn about the great artists of the past. The SACI Artists Council, established in 2003, is a group of internationally renowned artists, filmmakers, photographers, designers, architects, and other professionals in the art world who support SACI and its mission. The Artists Council was conceived by SACI founder and director emeritus **Jules Maidoff** as a way for prominent artists to be advocates for the school and to interact with SACI students. With the generous support of **Corice Canton Arman**, the Artists Council has attracted as members esteemed artists from around the world who believe in SACI’s goals as a not-for-profit international art school that equips students with the technical, cultural, and intellectual means necessary to pursue a life of creative inquiry in the field of visual arts.

Artists Council members engage with SACI students in a variety of ways, including: lecturing at

SACI; holding solo exhibitions in the SACI Gallery; conducting workshops at SACI and critiquing SACI students’ artworks; participating in symposiums hosted by SACI; teaching SACI courses; and visiting SACI as an artist-in-residence. In recent years, SACI students have met and worked with internationally renowned SACI Artists Council members such as **Audrey Flack, Jill Furmanovsky, Ralph Gibson, Paul Karasik, Simonetta Moro, Beverly Pepper, Roger Phillips, Rocha da Silva, Amalie R. Rothschild, Storm Thorgerson, and Rick Valicenti.** Other Artists Council members who have offered their support to SACI include **Armand P. Arman, Roberto Barni, Connie Britton, Christo & Jean-Claude, Jim Dine, Bryan Hunt, Peter Hutchinson, Philip Pearlstein, Edward Povey, Sting, and Ben Vereen.**

### **Summer Non-credit Study at SACI**

During the Summer term, it is possible to enroll at SACI as a non-credit student and take one class selected from SACI’s courses in studio art, design, conservation, art history, and Italian language. Non-credit students attend classes along with regularly-enrolled students and have full use of the SACI Worthington Library and computers for word processing, e-mailing, and Internet research. They can also attend SACI lectures, gallery openings, open drawing sessions, film nights, and Sunday field trips to sites throughout Tuscany. Participants can choose to attend from July 1-18 or July 1-31. For more information about Summer Non-Credit Study at SACI, visit the Study Programs section on the SACI website: [www.saci-florence.edu](http://www.saci-florence.edu)

## only@saci The SACI Gallery

SACI's faculty and administration believe that students should view at firsthand works of art that challenge, inspire, and nurture the imagination and intellect. "The SACI experience" therefore includes extensive field trips to churches, museums, archaeological sites, galleries, and art fairs—and an exhibition program in which artworks by both SACI students and internationally-recognized artists are featured in the SACI Gallery, which is on the ground floor of SACI's main building, the Palazzo dei Cartelloni.

SACI Gallery exhibitions are coordinated by **Naomi Muirhead**. They have showcased work by international artists, such as SACI Artists Council members **Beverly Pepper** and **Simonetta Moro**, whose subject or themes are rooted in their experience of Italy. As part of SACI's efforts to enhance cultural life within the Florentine community, SACI also seeks to discover and highlight the work of emerging Italian artists and international artists living in Italy.

Recent SACI Gallery exhibitions have included one-person shows of designs by internationally celebrated designers **Alessandro Mendini** and **Elio Fiorucci**; watercolors of Italian subjects by **Robert Carroll**, a painter associated with the Mercurio Arte Contemporanea Gallery in Viareggio; photographs by Florentine Soprintendenza per Beni Architettonici **Vincenzo Vaccaro** of Buddhist architecture in India, Myanmar, Vietnam, and Japan; the artworks of student finalists in the international Premio Celeste competition; photographs by **Susanna Lucia Lamaina** of her family village in Basilicata; and photographs taken throughout her career by SACI Artists Council and SACI President's Council member and Florence resident **Amalie R. Rothschild**.

SACI has long been committed to featuring in its gallery the work of both regular SACI faculty members and visiting instructors from SACI Consortium schools. Recent solo and two-person exhibitions by SACI instructors and artists-in-residence include still life and figure paintings by 2D SACI instructor **Karen Yurkovich**; tabletop paintings by SACI graduate area head **Lorenzo Pezzatini** and his son **Giovanni**; sculptures by SACI drawing and sculpture instructors **Dario Arcamone** and **John Taylor**; encaustic paintings by SACI artist-in-residence **Deborah Howard**, associate professor of art at the University of Denver; paintings by SACI artist-in-residence **Phyllis Plattner**, adjunct faculty member at Maryland Institute College of Art; and mixed media artworks by SACI visiting instructor **David Lindsay**, assistant professor of art at Texas Tech University. Group exhibitions of artworks by faculty members from a number of SACI Consortium schools have been held at the SACI Gallery.



The SACI Gallery in SACI's main building, the Palazzo dei Cartelloni.

SACI also regularly hosts student exhibitions. Each Fall, a series of group exhibitions are held at SACI for students in 2D, 3D, design, and photography classes. In both the Fall and Spring, group exhibitions for SACI digital multimedia students are held in Florence's La Corte Arte Contemporanea Gallery. At the end of the Spring term, works by SACI students are selected by SACI instructors for inclusion in a student "end-of-year" exhibition in the SACI Gallery, and SACI graduate students exhibit selected work at La Corte Arte Contemporanea. In helping to install these exhibitions, students learn about matting, framing, using pedestals, sequencing work, lighting, hanging, labelling, designing invitations and posters, and, most importantly, developing exhibition concepts and themes. Student exhibitions also enable SACI to share with the Italian community the creative responses of SACI students to living and studying in Florence.



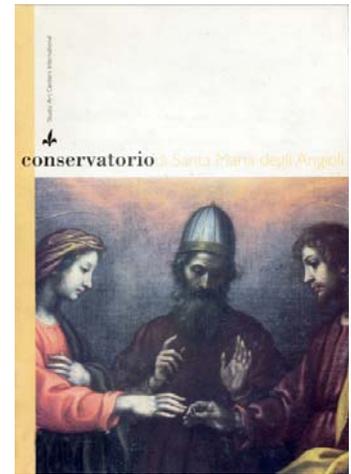
For many years, SACI has published under its own colophon, The Underdog Press, and in conjunction with Florence's Edifir Press, a wide array of texts on scholarly and cultural projects undertaken by SACI instructors and students. The publication that has generated the most interest is the *Painted Optics Symposium: Re-examining the Hockney-Falco Thesis 7 Years On* (published by the Fondazione Giorgio Ronchi, 2009), which features the papers presented at the *Painted Optics* symposium hosted by SACI in September 2008. The volume includes a foreword by SACI president **Mary Beckinsale** and articles by British painter **David Hockney**, University of Arizona physicist **Dr. Charles M. Falco**, SACI conservation area head **Dr. Roberta Lapucci**, Museum of the History of Science vice director **Dr. Filippo Camerota**, art diagnostician **Dr. Claudio Pernechele**, and art historians **Dr. John T. Spike** and **Dr. Susan Grundy**.

A number of SACI publications have focused on the unique research and restoration efforts of SACI conservation faculty and students. *Santa Maria degli Angiolini a Firenze*, a major book commemorating ten years of SACI faculty and student conservation work on Francesco Curradi lunettes, other artworks,

furnishings, and the organ at Florence's Conservatorio of Santa Maria degli Angiolini was published in 2006. The book offers comprehensive descriptions of the history of the church and its artworks, the restoration work undertaken by SACI faculty and students, and the diagnostic analyses that enabled this project to proceed.

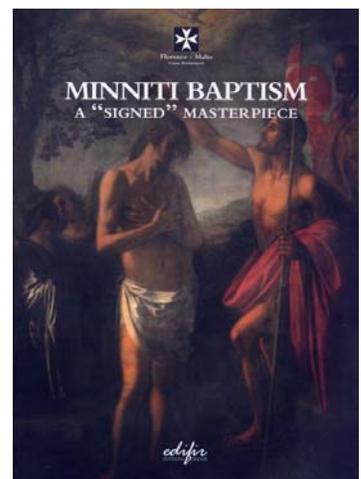
SACI has also published two earlier monographs on this project: *Diagnostic Analysis for the Conservation Intervention* and *The Treatment and Cleaning of "The Assumption"*

and "*The Marriage of the Virgin*," which feature articles by Mary Beckinsale, Roberta Lapucci, current Soprintendente del Polo Museale Fiorentino and honorary SACI board member **Cristina Acidini**, art diagnosticians **Maurizio Seracini**, **Antonio Quattrone**, **Duilio Bertani**, **Luca Pezzati**, former SACI conservation instructors **Stefano Garosi** and **Alessandro Gori**, and additional texts by **Beatrice Paolozzi Strozzi**, **Paolo Gori**, **Piero Iandelli**, and SACI alumna **Eowyn Kerr**.



A recent Edifir Press publication is *The Zejtun Painting: Shades of Caravaggio*, a monograph on the painting *The Martyrdom of St. Catherine of Alexandria*, which was restored at SACI over a two-year period by SACI students under the supervision of Roberta Lapucci and is now again on display in Malta's St. Gregory Zejtun Church. The publication, which is the initial volume in the *Florence-Malta: Cross References* series, was sponsored by SACI (the Caravaggio Foundation in Malta and SACI are sponsoring alternating volumes in the series). It includes a preface by Mary Beckinsale and articles by Roberta Lapucci, SACI conservation instructor **Leonardo Borgioli**, SACI alumni **Emily Derse** and **Nicole Huter**, **Dr. Tonio Fenech** and **Dr. Jovan Mizzi** of the Caravaggio Foundation, and **Canon Joe Abela** and **Father Gino Gauci** of the Diocese of Malta.

Another recent publication in this series, *Minniti Baptism: A "Signed" Masterpiece*, offers a detailed description of the restoration performed by SACI students on Malta of *The Baptism of Christ*, by Mario Minniti, which is located in the Nunnery of St. Ursula in

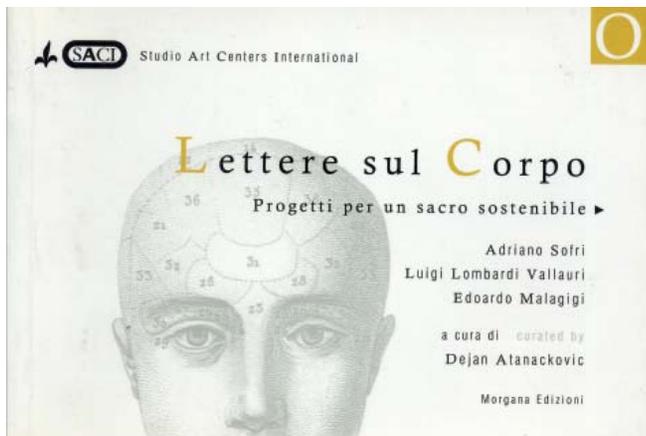


Valetta, Malta. The volume contains a preface by Mary Beckinsale and articles by Roberta Lapucci, Leonardo Borgioli, Emily Derse, art diagnosticians **Susanna Bracci** and **Paolo Pierattini**, art historians **Keith Sciberra** and **Donatella Spagnolo**, and Frs. **Charles Vella** and **George Aquilina**.



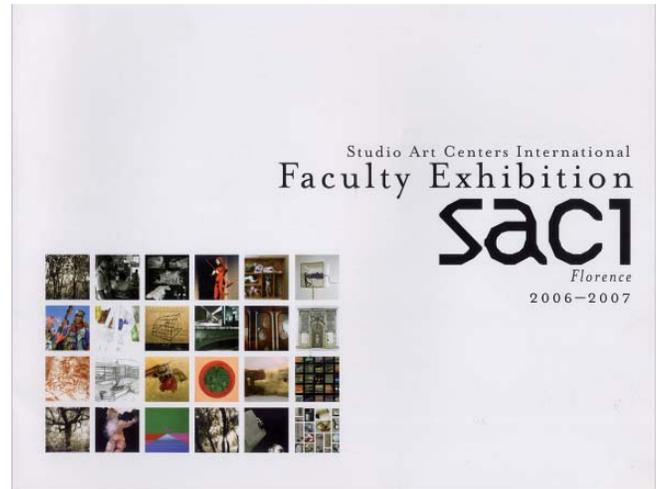
Two Underdog Press publications are devoted to a series of exhibitions held in the SACI Gallery, under the auspices of the Florence City Cultural Office, which showcased the work of non-traditional young Italian artists.

These monographs, *Comparisons* and *Events*, include introductions by Mary Beckinsale and essays on the works of participating artists by the exhibitions' curators, SACI art history and museology instructor **Maria Antonia Rinaldi** and former SACI art history instructor **Matteo Chini**.



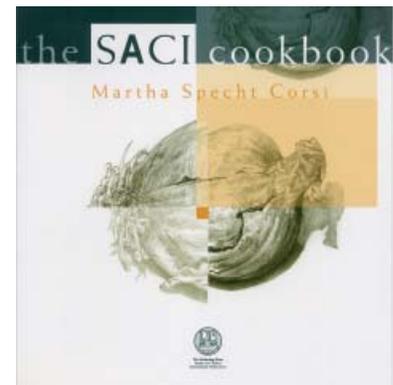
SACI is also responsible for the publication by Morgana Edizioni of *Letters on the Body: Projects for a Sustainable Sacred* which features essays on representations of the body written by Mary Beckinsale, SACI digital multimedia instructor **Dejan Atanackovic**, **Edoardo Malagigi**, **Luigi Lombardi Vallauri**, and **Adriano Sofri**.

In collaboration with Bowling Green State University, SACI published a catalogue entitled *Art from*



*Florence: The SACI Faculty Exhibition*, with an introduction and text by Mary Beckinsale, which described the artwork and background of SACI instructors who participated in a recent traveling exhibition that was featured at a number of SACI Consortium schools, the Art Students League of New York, and the SACI Gallery.

Perhaps the most popular SACI publication is *The SACI Cookbook*, written by **Martha Corsi**, who each Fall and Spring term teaches a non-credit three-session course at SACI on Tuscan culture and cuisine. The book, which was revised



and newly illustrated by SACI students in 2003, is intended for study-abroad students living in Florence, and is especially useful to those who are for the first time cooking for themselves. It was produced in the hope that by learning how to prepare dishes based upon Tuscan cuisine students would come to appreciate more deeply Florence, the Florentines, and their local customs and traditions.

The covers of a number of these publications are featured here. A complete list of SACI publications—including volumes written by or about SACI faculty members—can be found on SACI's website: [www.saci-florence.edu](http://www.saci-florence.edu).

## only@saci The SACI Consortium

In 1998, SACI founder and director emeritus **Jules Maidoff** established the SACI Consortium. Invitations to join were extended to colleges and universities that had already been sending to SACI outstanding students, as well as to schools that shared SACI's educational philosophy.

There are now 37 SACI Consortium member institutions, ranging from Columbia University on the East Coast to the University of Southern California on the West Coast; Skidmore College in the North to Texas Tech University in the South; art schools such as Maryland Institute College of Art to liberal arts schools such as Albion College; private institutions such as American University to public ones such as the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill; small schools such as Berry College to mega-universities such as Pennsylvania State University (a complete list of member institutions is on the SACI website—[www.saci-florence.edu](http://www.saci-florence.edu)).

All SACI Consortium schools share SACI's commitment to offering students the finest possible study-abroad experience, including the opportunity to choose from the largest range of studio art, design, art history, conservation, and Italian language and culture classes offered by any US university-level program in Europe—and the possibility of connecting, through language exchange, class projects, volunteer activities, and supervised internships, with diverse members of the Italian community.

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Schools that are members of the SACI Consortium benefit in a number of ways. Each institution may nominate one student every Fall and Spring term to compete for the *SACI Consortium Full-Tuition Scholarship*. This prestigious scholarship, currently valued at \$11,800, is awarded to an incoming student from a SACI Consortium school each Fall and Spring.

Faculty members from SACI Consortium member institutions who are interested in bringing groups of students from their schools to study at SACI during the 5½-week (mid-May to end of June) Late Spring term or 4½-week (July) Summer term have the possibility of coming to Florence for the duration of the term as a SACI visiting instructor, artist-in-residence, or scholar-in-residence.

SACI additionally offers faculty members from SACI Consortium schools assistance with their art and research projects by providing access to SACI's facilities and helping artists and scholars connect with the many important cultural, artistic, and historical institutions in Florence and throughout Italy.

SACI also regularly hosts in the SACI Gallery group and solo exhibitions of artworks by selected faculty members from SACI Consortium schools.

Faculty and administrators from SACI Consortium schools are eligible to attend the annual SACI Consortium meeting in Florence, a multi-day series of events each November that focuses on the impact of study-abroad and art education trends and policies on art students, faculty, and administrators. During these sessions, participants are encouraged to share ideas about how SACI can best educate students during their period of study in Florence. (See page 7.)



In the garden at SACI's Palazzo dei Cartelloni (left to right): **Charles Garoian** (Pennsylvania State University); **Lynn Neddo** (University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill); **Don Kimes** (American University); SACI founder and director emeritus **Jules Maidoff**; **Petra Visscher** (Maryland Institute College of Art); **Scott Raynor** (High Point University); **Nichole Maury** (Western Michigan University); **Char Norman** (Columbus College of Art & Design); **Stan Guidera** (Bowling Green State University); **Ronald M. Cohen** (University of Iowa); SACI president **Mary Beckinsale**; SACI director of enrollment management **Sandra Mazara**; **Robert Griffith** (Marywood University). (Photo by SACI student affairs coordinator **Chiara Tollerli**.)

## The 11th Annual SACI Consortium Meeting

From November 18 to 21, administrators and faculty members from SACI Consortium colleges and universities throughout the USA met at SACI in Florence for a series of discussions and events coordinated by SACI founder and director emeritus **Jules Maidoff**. Participants attended sessions exploring ways to establish stronger ties between SACI and Consortium schools. SACI's area heads spoke about SACI's graduate, 2D, 3D, media, design, conservation, and crafts areas, and SACI administrators discussed SACI's on-line application; how students select and enroll in SACI classes; accommodations available to SACI students; and the process by which students are nominated for and awarded the *SACI Consortium Full-Tuition Scholarship*.



During a discussion of ways participating institutions could go “Beyond the International Crisis” to facilitate study abroad in the arts, Jules announced that the recipient of the second annual SACI Consortium Award is **Sara Dumont** of American University, director of AU Abroad-Abroad at AU. Sara was cited for her “outstanding and demonstrated belief in the vision, mission, and didactic importance of SACI” and for her efforts, over many years, which confirm “the seriousness and importance of international education in the arts in today’s world.”

Participants toured SACI's main educational facility, the Palazzo dei Cartelloni, and SACI's newly

acquired Renaissance palazzo, the Jules Maidoff Palazzo for the Visual Arts, which is two blocks from the Duomo in Florence's historic center, and is now the site of SACI's Design/Multimedia Center, Graduate Center, and additional lecture halls, classrooms, studios, darkrooms, student lounges, and administrative offices.

The sessions concluded with a visit to two of Florence's most noted exhibition spaces—the Palazzo Strozzi and the newly reopened Museo Bardini. At the Palazzo Strozzi, the group first toured an exhibition entitled “Art and Illusion,” which featured *trompe-l'oeil* masterpieces from antiquity to the present, then visited an exhibition on contemporary art entitled “Manipulating Reality.” At the Museo Bardini, SACI art history teaching assistant **Dr. Anna Piperato** led the group on a guided tour of the museum's remarkable collection, which ranges from artworks by Old Masters such as Tiepolo and Donatello to drawings, paintings, sculptures, ceramics, frescoes, tapestries, furniture, weaponry, and armor by myriad artists and craftsmen. The tour of the Museo Bardini was followed by a farewell lunch at a nearby *trattoria* in Florence's lively *San Niccolò* district.

Attending the 11th Annual SACI Consortium meeting were **Daisy Church** (University of Southern California); **Robert M. Cohen** (University of Iowa); **Charles Garoian** (Pennsylvania State University); **Robert Griffith** (Marywood University); **Stan Guida** (Bowling Green State University); **Don Kimes** (American University); **Nichole Maury** (Western Michigan University); **Lynn Neddo** (University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill); **Char Norman** (Columbus College of Art & Design); **Scott Raynor** (High Point University); and **Petra Visscher** (Maryland Institute College of Art)—all of whom received personalized *Certificates of Attendance* for participating in the 11th Annual SACI Consortium meeting.

### SACI Teaching Assistantships

SACI invites alumni to apply for Teaching Assistantships in the following areas: Photography, Conservation, and Art History. Completed applications must be received at SACI by **May 1**. For information about how to apply, see the Alumni section on the SACI website:

[www.saci-florence.edu](http://www.saci-florence.edu)



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## *only @ saci* New Summer Program in Cetamura

In collaboration with the Maryland Institute College of Art, SACI will offer in Summer 2010, on the Tuscan hilltop site of Cetamura, a unique archaeological conservation program: *From Site to Shelf*. Students will excavate Etruscan and Roman artifacts under the supervision of **Dr. Nancy T. de Grummond**, Florida State University's M. Lynette Thompson Professor of Classics; restore these objects in a 3-credit course taught at a laboratory in nearby San Giovanni Valdarno with SACI conservation instructor **Nora Marosi**; and participate in a 3-credit seminar on Etruscan art and civilization conducted by **Dr. Joseph Basile**, professor of art history at the Maryland Institute College of Art, and other specialists. The students will reside near the site in the charming fortified Chianti town of Radda and go on field trips to the key Etruscan sites of Fiesole, Volterra, Tarquinia, and Orvieto to view remarkable Etruscan frescoes, tombs, and archaeological objects.

For more information about this program, see the SACI website: [www.saci-florence.edu](http://www.saci-florence.edu).

### Studio Art Centers International (SACI)

is a United States non-profit 501 c (3) educational entity founded in 1975 and incorporated in 1976. SACI is a directly accredited institutional member of the National Association of Schools of Art and Design (NASAD). SACI is affiliated with Bowling Green State University in Ohio, which is accredited by NASAD and the North Central Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools.



SACI conservation student restoring an artifact found at the Cetamura site.

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